



To: Richmond City Council **Date:** July 18, 2007
From: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair **File:** 12-8060-20-8244
Re: **Basic Universal Housing Guideline – Zoning Bylaw Amendment**

The Planning Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, July 17, 2007, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

- (1) That the proposed Amendment Bylaw 8244 (Floor Area Ratio Exemption for Basic Universal Housing Features) to amend the Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300 be introduced and given first reading.*
- (2) That a letter be sent to the Hon. Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing, and to the three local MLA's, requesting that the provincial standard universal housing bylaw be formulated and provided to the City as soon as possible.*

Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Planning Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That the proposed Amendment Bylaw 8244 (Floor Area Ratio Exemption for Basic Universal Housing Features) to amend the Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300 be introduced and given first reading.

Staff Report

Origin

The development and implementation of a universal housing regulation has been explored at the City for a number of years. Staff have completed an updated review and analysis of existing universal housing bylaws, stakeholder consultation, and developed the proposed Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300 Amendment Bylaw 8244.

Findings Of Fact

The universal housing features within the proposed Amendment Bylaw 8244 reflects a general consensus of the Richmond Committee on Disabilities, the Urban Development Institute and City staff. The purpose of the amendment is to enable the construction of basic universal housing features for:

- (a) One level apartment units in a building containing an elevator; and
- (b) One level ground floor townhouse units.

The objective of these basic universal housing features is to enable the construction of one level apartment units in a building containing an elevator and one level ground floor townhouse units that can be visited and occupied by a person with a disability.

Concurrent Authority

Concurrent authority was established by the Province under the Community Charter in 2003. Some local governments adopted universal housing bylaws prior to 2003, at which time Provincial approval was not required. The Province's objective under concurrent authority is to establish consistency in building standards across all local jurisdictions. To further this end, the Province has established a workgroup to develop a standard universal housing bylaw within the year. The Province has indicated they will not be approving any universal housing bylaws that make features mandatory until the standard has been developed and adopted. The Province has also advised that the workgroup has completed its work and the Building Policy Branch is now reviewing the findings and recommendations.

The proposed amendment identifies dimensional and functional building standards that fall within the scope of the BC Building Code. If the amendment made universal housing features a requirement, then it would require Provincial concurrent authority approval prior to adoption. The proposed Amendment Bylaw 8244 does not make the universal housing features a requirement, but presents them as an option that can be used to obtain an FAR bonus. As such, the Amendment Bylaw 8244 does not require concurrent authority approval from the Province.

It is currently anticipated that the Province will establish its standard bylaw in early 2008. When this occurs, staff will report back to Council with a recommendation on adopting the standard bylaw and replacing the currently proposed zoning bylaw amendment.

Analysis

Option 1 – Status Quo (not recommended)

There are no current incentives for developers to build beyond the requirements of the current building code to meet accessibility needs. Maintaining the status quo will not improve the availability of accessible housing.

Option 2 – Basic Universal Housing Regulatory Bylaw (not recommended)

A bylaw requiring universal housing features as a regulation would likely not be given concurrent authority approval by the Province at this stage. Taking this approach would then at worst, be a dead-end and at best, leave the policy development in limbo.

Option 3 – Basic Universal Housing Guideline (recommended)

Adopting the recommended zoning bylaw amendment will establish a clear objective for universal housing features. Developers will be enabled to meet that objective with the benefit of the proposed FAR exemption. This option presents the best chance for having more accessible units constructed in the immediate future.

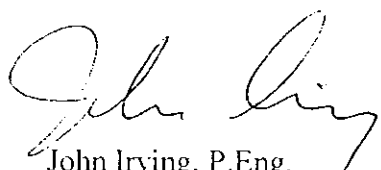
Many developers are already incorporating some universal design features. This amendment will establish a uniform and comprehensive standard for developers and staff will be able to encourage developers to take advantage of the FAR exemption. Council will be advised whether or not projects are universally accessible when considering rezoning applications and development permits.

Financial Impact

None

Conclusion

Adopting the proposed Amendment Bylaw 8244 will address the short-to-medium term objectives of the City and stakeholders for improving multi-family residential accessibility. Staff will monitor developments in this policy area at the provincial level and will report back to Council when the option for a regulatory approach becomes available.



John Irving, P.Eng.
Director, Building Approvals
(4140)



**Richmond Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300
Amendment Bylaw 8244
(Floor Area Ratio Exemption for Basic Universal Housing Features)**

The Council of the City of Richmond, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

- 1. The Richmond *Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300* is amended at Section 104 by adding the following definition:

BASIC UNIVERSAL HOUSING FEATURES means a set of permanent building features designed, built, installed or affixed in accordance with Schedule C to Division 200 of this Bylaw to facilitate universal access to and use of a **dwelling unit**, including access and use by a person with a physical disability.

- 2. The Richmond *Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300*, is amended at Division 200 as follows:

- (a) The following Subsection is added to Section 201 after the existing Subsections and is numbered sequentially in accordance with the date of its enactment:

“Floor Area Ratio Exemption for Basic Universal Housing Features

- (a) A **dwelling unit** that incorporates all of the **basic universal housing features** described in Schedule C to Division 200 is an amenity within the meaning of section 904 of the *Local Government Act*.

- (b) Notwithstanding a provision for **floor area ratio** established in a zoning district bylaw within this Division,

- (i) a **dwelling unit** that is fully contained within one **storey** in an apartment **building** containing an elevator, or

- (ii) a **townhouse** that is fully contained within one **storey**

is exempted from the maximum **floor area ratio** calculations total of 1.86 m² (20 ft²) per **dwelling unit** where the **dwelling unit** or **townhouse** incorporates all of the **basic universal housing features** described in Schedule C to Division 200.”

- (b) Schedule C, attached to and forming part of this bylaw, is added to Division 200.

- 3. This Bylaw may be cited as "Richmond Zoning and Development Bylaw 5300, Amendment Bylaw 8244".

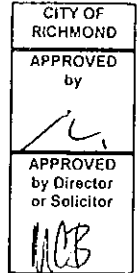
FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEARING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED



MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER

SCHEDULE C TO DIVISION 200

BASIC UNIVERSAL HOUSING FEATURES

PART ONE: PURPOSE

- 1.1 The **basic universal housing features** described in this Schedule are intended to facilitate ready access, use and occupancy of a **dwelling unit** by a person with a disability.

PART TWO: BASIC UNIVERSAL HOUSING FEATURES

2.1 Building Access

- 2.1.1. Each **dwelling unit** and each type of **amenity space** shall be accessible to a person with a disability from a **public road** and from an off-street parking area.
- 2.1.2. Access to the elevator shall be provided from both the **public road** and the entry to the off-street parking area.
- 2.1.3. An automatic door opener shall be provided at the main entry.

2.2 Doors and Doorways

- 2.2.1 The minimum clear openings for all entry doors to every **dwelling unit** and doors in common areas shall be no less than 855mm (which will be provided by a swing door).
- 2.2.2 The minimum clear opening for the interior doors to at least one bedroom and one accessible bathroom in every **dwelling unit** shall be no less than 800mm (which will be provided by a swing door).
- 2.2.3 Doors in every **dwelling unit** and common areas shall be operable by devices that do not require tight grasping or twisting of wrist.
- 2.2.4 Flush thresholds throughout the **building** shall be a maximum of 13mm in height.
- 2.2.5 The above-noted requirements for doors do not apply to mechanical rooms, service areas, closets, etc. where through access is not required and access to a person with a disability is not anticipated.
- 2.2.6 Clear openings shall be measured as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Clear Opening Measurement For Doors

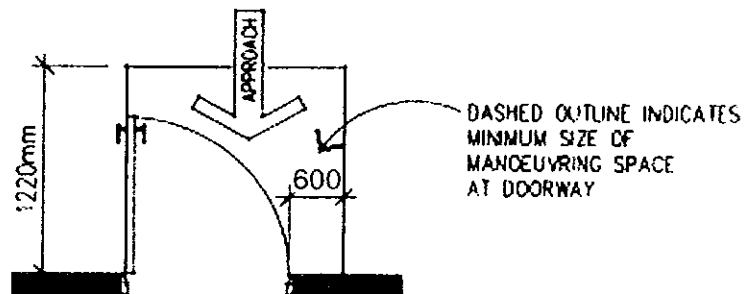


2.3 Manoeuvring Space at Doorways

2.3.1 Entry doors to every **dwelling unit** and door assemblies in common areas shall have a clear and level area which is not less than the following:

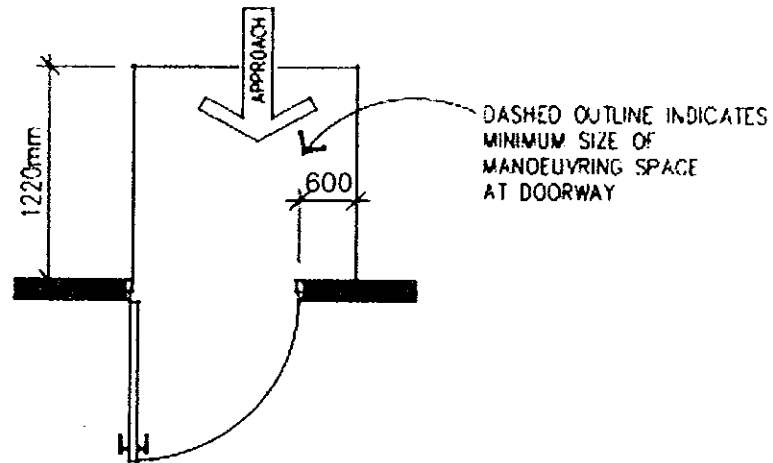
- (a) Where the door swings toward the area (pull door), 1220mm long by the width of the door plus at least 600mm clear space on the latch side, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Front Approach, Pull Side



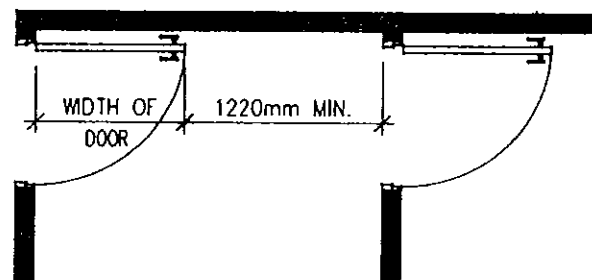
- (b) Where the door swings away from the area (push door), 1220mm long by the width of the door plus at least 600mm clear space on the latch side, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Front Approach, Push Side



- (c) Where there are doors in a series in common areas, there must be separation of at least 1220mm plus the width of the door, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Separation of Doors in Series



- (d) Entry doors to every dwelling unit are exempted from the requirement to provide the 1220mm long clear area and 600mm clear space if rough in wiring is provided for future conversion for an automatic door opener.

2.4 Corridor Widths

- 2.4.1 Common corridors shall be no less than 1220mm wide.

2.5 Floor Surfaces

- 2.5.1 Floor surfaces throughout the **building** shall have no abrupt changes in level, i.e., a maximum break of the flush threshold of 13mm height.
- 2.5.2 Floor surfaces shall be slip resistant.
- 2.5.3 Where carpets are used, they must be firmly fixed, have a firm underlay and pile under 13mm height.

2.6 Windows

- 2.6.1 Windows which are accessible shall have a window sill height that does not exceed 750mm above the floor to afford seated viewing. At least one window in the bedroom and one window in the living room shall afford such seated viewing.
- 2.6.2 Windows which are accessible shall have opening mechanisms operable with one hand and of a type that does not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the unit.

2.7 Outlets and Switches

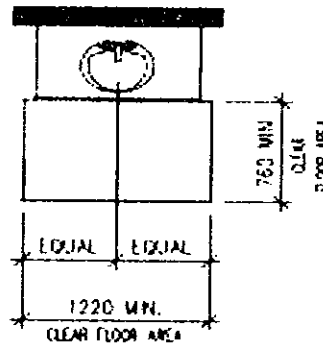
- 2.7.1 Light switches, electrical panels and intercom buttons shall be a maximum 1220mm from the floor.
- 2.7.2 Electrical outlets, cable outlets, and telephone jacks shall be located not less than 450mm from the floor.
- 2.7.3 Thermostats shall be located between 900mm to 1350mm from the floor.
- 2.7.4 The operable part of controls shall be located within reach of a clear floor area that has a width of not less than 750mm.
- 2.7.5 Light switches will be rocker or paddle-type switches.

2.8 Bathrooms

- 2.8.1 At least one bathroom shall:
 - (a) have a toilet positioned with the centre line of the toilet 420mm to 480mm from a side wall on which a grab bar can be installed and at least 1020mm from any obstruction on the non-grab bar side or in front of the toilet;

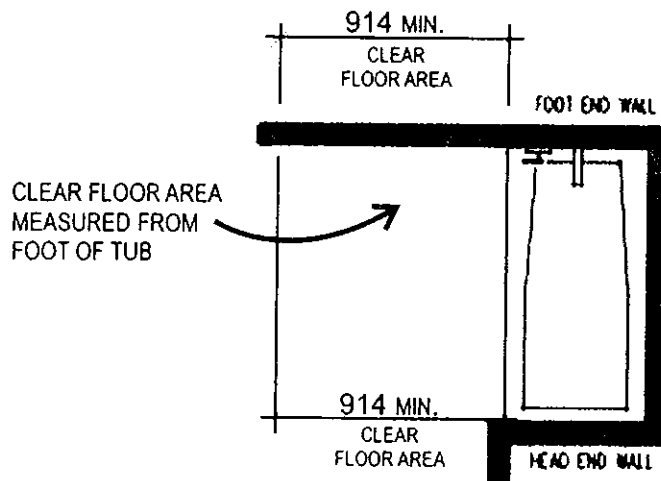
- (b) have a clear floor area at the sink of 760 by 1220mm positioned for a parallel approach and centred on the sink, as illustrated in Figure 5;

Figure 5. Clear Floor Area at Sink



- (c) have a minimum clear area of 914mm in depth along the full length of the bathtub, as illustrated in Figure 6;

Figure 6. Clear Floor Area at Tub



- (d) have structural reinforcement in walls behind and beside the toilet and the walls around the tub and/or shower to facilitate the installation of grab bars; and
- (e) include easy to grasp handles on faucets, e.g., lever-type faucets.

2. 8.2 Where bathrooms are provided to serve a common **amenity space**, at least one shall be wheelchair accessible as described in the *B.C. Building Code* and the top of the rim of the toilet in that one bathroom shall be 480mm above the floor.

2.9 Kitchens

2.9.1 The **kitchen** must have:

- (a) some usable counter space and cupboards that can be easily accessed by people with disabilities, including people with wheelchairs, e.g., continuous counter between the stove and sink; adjustable shelves in all cabinets; pull-out work boards at 810mm height; pull-out cabinet shelves;
- (b) easy to grasp handles on faucets, e.g., lever-type faucets;
- (c) easy to reach and grasp handles on cupboards, e.g., D or J type cabinet handles and grab edges under counters;
- (d) task lighting at sink, stove and key work areas; and
- (e) plumbing and utility pipes located to provide for a potential 810mm wide under counter workspace so as not to prevent the easy future conversion of counter space and sinks to being universally accessible for knee space under the sink and where there is a counter top stove built in.

2.10 Bedroom & Closet

- 2.10.1 The space around a bed in a **dwelling unit** that consists of a bachelor suite and at least one bedroom in every other **dwelling unit** shall have sufficient space to provide a turning diameter of 1500mm on one side of a double bed.
- 2.10.2 The clothes closet in a **dwelling unit** that consists of a bachelor suite and at least one bedroom in every other **dwelling unit** shall have a clear opening of at least 900mm, clear floor space of at least 750mm by 1200mm and a clothes hanger rod than can be lowered to 1200mm.

2.11 Patios and Balconies

- 2.11.1 Access doors shall have a minimum clear opening of 860mm.
- 2.11.3 Minimum dimensions of any balcony or patio shall be 1500mm by 1500mm.